

What is Claimed is:

Sub A 1. An interactive television system having user television equipment on which an interactive television application is at least partially implemented to allow parental control of television programming viewing of users, said user television equipment, being configured to:

support multiple user accounts, each of which has a different associated personal identification code;

allow the interactive television application to be used to establish different parental control criteria for each of the multiple accounts;

block the viewing of television programming that match at least one of the parental control criteria;

allow users to view television programming that is not blocked; and

allow a given one of the users to view blocked television programming by entering a personal identification code for one of the accounts that has parental control criteria that permit the blocked television programming to be viewed.

2. The system defined in claim 1 wherein at least one account has been designated as a parent account and at least one account is designated as a child account.

3. The system defined in claim 2 wherein the parent account is without restrictions on television programming viewing.

4. The system defined in claim 2 wherein the user television equipment is configured to temporarily bypass television programming from being blocked on entry of the personal identification code for the parent account.

5. The system defined in claim 1 wherein advertisements are targeted based on which personal identification code was most recently entered.

6. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the user television equipment is configured to track blocked television programming that was viewed based on the personal identification code that was entered to view the television programming.

7. The system defined in claim 6 wherein the user television equipment is configured to display a log of blocked television programming that was viewed on entry of one of the personal identification codes and an account name corresponding to the respective code that was entered to view the programming.

8. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the interactive television application is an interactive television program guide application.

9. A method for use in an interactive television system having user television equipment on which an interactive television application is at least partially implemented to allow parental control of television programming viewing of users, comprising:

using the interactive television application to support multiple user accounts, each of which has a different associated personal identification code;

using the interactive television application to allow users to establish different parental control criteria for each of the multiple accounts;

blocking the viewing of television programming that match at least one of the parental control criteria;

allowing users to view television programming that is not blocked; and

allowing a given one of the users to view blocked television programming by entering a personal identification code for one of the accounts that has parental control criteria that permit the blocked television programming to be viewed.

10. The method defined in claim 9 further comprising:

designating at least one account as a parent account; and

designating at least one account as a child account.

11. The method defined in claim 10 wherein the parent account is without restrictions on television programming viewing.

12. The method defined in claim 10 further comprising temporarily bypassing television programming

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from being blocked on entry of the personal identification code for the parent account.

13. The method defined in claim 9 further comprising targeting advertisements based on which personal identification code was most recently entered.

14. The method defined in claim 9 further comprising tracking television programming that was viewed based on the personal identification code that was entered to view the television programming.

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15. The method defined in claim 14 further comprising displaying a log of blocked television programming that was viewed on entry of one of the personal identification codes and an account name corresponding to the respective code that was entered to view the programming.

16. The method defined in claim 9 wherein the interactive television application is an interactive television program guide application.

17. An interactive television system having user television equipment on which an interactive television application is at least partially implemented to allow parental control of purchasing through the user television equipment, said user television equipment, being configured to:

support multiple user accounts, each of which has a different associated personal identification code;

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allow the interactive television application to be used to establish different purchase control criteria for each of the multiple accounts;

block purchases from being made based on the purchase control criteria;

allow users to make purchases that are not blocked; and

allow a given one of the users to make purchases that have been blocked by entering a personal identification code for one of the accounts that has purchase control criteria that permit completion of the block purchases.

18. The system defined in claim 17 wherein at least one account is designated as a parent account and at least one account is designated as a child account.

19. The system defined in claim 18 wherein the parent account is without restrictions on making purchases.

20. The system defined in claim 18 wherein the user television equipment is configured to temporarily bypass purchases from being blocked on entry of the personal identification code for the parent account.

21. The system defined in claim 17 wherein advertisements are targeted based on which personal identification code was most recently entered.

22. The system defined in claim 17 wherein the user television equipment is configured to track blocked purchases that were made based on the personal identification code that was entered to make the purchases.

23. The system defined in claim 22 wherein the user television equipment is configured to display a log of blocked purchases that were made and an account name corresponding to the respective code that was used to make the blocked purchase.

24. The system defined in claim 17 wherein the interactive television application is an interactive television program guide application.

25. A method for use in an interactive television system having user television equipment on which an interactive television application is at least partially implemented to allow parental control of purchasing through the user television equipment, comprising:

using the interactive television application to support multiple user accounts, each of which has a different associated personal identification code;

using the interactive television application to allow users to establish different purchase control criteria for each of the multiple accounts;

blocking purchases from being made based on the purchase control criteria;

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allowing users to make purchases that are not blocked; and

allowing a given one of the users to make purchases that have been blocked by entering a personal identification code for one of the accounts that has purchase control criteria that permit completion of the block purchases.

26. The method defined in claim 25 further comprising:

designating at least one account as a parent account; and

designating at least one account as a child account.

27. The method defined in claim 26 wherein the parent account is without restrictions on making purchases.

28. The method defined in claim 26 further comprising temporarily bypassing purchases from being blocked on entry of the personal identification code for the parent account.

29. The method defined in claim 25 further comprising targeting advertisements based on which personal identification code was most recently entered.

30. The method defined in claim 25 further comprising tracking blocked purchases that were made based on the personal identification code that was entered to make the purchases.

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31. The method defined in claim 30 wherein further comprising displaying a log of blocked purchases that were made and an account name corresponding to the respective code that was used to make the blocked purchase.

32. The method defined in claim 25 wherein the interactive television application is an interactive television program guide application.